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## CURRENT NOTES ON ANTHROPOLOGY.

## NATIVE AMERICAN TEXTILE ART.

A MONOGRAPH of much beauty and interest has lately appeared from the pen of Prof. W. H. Holmes, of the Field Columbian Museum. Its subject is the 'Prehistoric Textile Art of the Eastern United States,' and it a portion of the 13th Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology. The topics taken up are the basketry, matting, cloths, nets, featherwork, embroidery and wattling of the Indians in the region designated, as these arts existed before the arrival of the white man. The primitive methods of spinning and weaving are explained, and the various knots and stitches illustrated by numerous engravings. Incidentally, the styles of clothing in former use are touched upon.

A chapter is added on 'fossil fabrics,' by which is meant those exhumed from caves, mounds, shelters and other deposits supposed by some to be the relics of a pre-Indian population. The result of the investigation here is noteworthy and adds to the evidence that it seems impossible to get away from the Red Indian in the Eastern United States. "Charred cloths from the great mounds are identical in material, combination of parts and texture with the fabrics of the simple savage." Nothing in them indicates a higher development of the art than was possessed by Algonkins and Iroquois.

## THE 'SECOND COLUMN' OF THE ACHEMENIDEAN INSCRIPTION.

THE famous inscription in cuneiform characters of the Achemenides is, as most readers are aware, in three columns, each a different language. The first is Old Persian; the third is the Assyrian dialect of the Semitic; but the second has been a standing puzzle. Some claimed it as Dravidian, others as a remote Aryan tongue, but most scholars, following Norris, Raw-

linson and Max Müller, looked upon it as 'Turanian,' by which is meant Ural-Altaic. It has been called Susian or Medic, and some have thought it related to the Sumerian or Acadian, of Babylonia.

The first thoroughly satisfactory analysis of its forms which has ever appeared has just been published at Breslau, from the pen of the profound Ural-Altaic scholar, Dr. Heinrich Winkler. He had already announced that this Susic was certainly not Ural-Altaic, nor was the Sumerian. In the present brochure of sixty-five quarto pages he proves that the verb of the Susic is a true verbal, whereas in the Ural-Altaic, like many American languages, it is a noun form; that the relative in the Susic is one that is real and not a mere connective; that the formation of the case relations is wholly distinct; and a number of other vital points.

As the second column is certainly not Altaic, what is it? To this Dr. Winkler replies by assigning a number of cogent reasons for believing it a member of the Caucasian group of related tongues.

His valuable essay, like that which he wrote on the relationship of the Japanese to the Ural-Altaic, has extremely important bearings on the ethnography of Asia. The full title is: 'Die Sprache der Zweiten Columne der Dreisprächigen Inschriften und das Altaische.' D. G. BRINTON.

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## SCIENTIFIC NOTES AND NEWS.

## ELECTRICAL CONDUCTION AT LOW TEMPERATURES.

IN a Friday evening discourse at the Royal Institution, Prof. J. A. Flemming, F.R.S., recently gave an account of the very interesting researches into the magnetic and electric properties of metals at low temperatures, which have been carried out, during the last four years, in the laboratories of the Royal Institution, by him in conjunction with Prof. Dewar.

According to the report in the London